1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6



114 of the chaguar (chahuar).[1] This statement, which is erroneous, is due to
262 the similarity of sound existing between chaguar[2] and chañar.[3] The *fruits* of the latter are eaten by the Indians, whilst of the former only the rootstock is edible.

251 By drying, the Choroti preserve vegetables against seasons of shortened food supply.

263 Personally I have not seen the Choroti use salt, but, nevertheless, they possess this condiment. Possibly they, like the Lengua, extract salt from the ash of a plant growing on the Chaco.[4] Salt-making from vegetable ash is known to many primitive peoples.[5]

264 Among the Choroti I never saw men and women eating together.

[462] The preparing of food is, as a rule, the work of the women. The
515 Choroti are not dainty about their food, and the uncleanliness which is
252 a distinguishing trait in culinary matters among these Indians surpasses almost anything I have ever observed among other primitive peoples, with the exception of the Mataco Indians. Of the latter, however, my experience is limited to only a few families, and it may be unfair to judge the whole tribes from those.

271 Water, often muddy, ordinarily forms the drink of the Choroti. When in the dry season the Indians are on the move, or from some reason or other find themselves far away from any river, they sometimes suffer very badly from lack of water.

273 In the season for harvesting wild fruits, such as algaroba, tusca, and chañar, an intoxicating fruit beer is brewed. During the time of year that I visited the Choroti, there were no fruits of which any intoxicating beverage could be brewed; consequently I never had an opportunity of observing either the brewing of beer, or any drinking carousal. This led me to suppose that the art of brewing fermented liquor was unknown to the Choroti. Nowadays the Choroti have learnt from the Chiriguano also how to brew maize beer. Of the Choroti method of beer-brewing, Nordenskiöld has given the following description:

»When tusca beer is to be made, the fruit is first of all ground, and they water added, the whole being thereupon left in a dirty animal hide,

[1] von Rosen (3), p. 9.
[2] Bromelia serra.
[3] Gourliea decorticans.
[4] Hawtrey (1), p. 287.
[5] For one method of producing salt from plants, see von Rosen (4), p. 240.

wife. Not infrequently it happens that two or more girls become enamoured of the same man. Then fierce fights are often fought out between the rivals, who in these encounters sometimes use knuckle-dusters or sharp-pointed bone awls (see fig. 111). The Choroti girls have a somewhat peculiar way of demonstrating their tender feelings towards their beloved; they do not kiss him, but scratch him with their nails and spit in his face![1]

When a woman has been taken to wife by the man she has chosen, the latter comes to live in her village, at least for some period of time.[2]

*Division of labour as between the sexes among the Choroti.*

M = men; W = Women.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rearing and care of livestock | M[3] | W[3] |
| Fire kindling, by drilling | M | |
| Collecting fuel | | W |
| » wild growing, edible plants | | W |
| » wild honey | M[3] | |
| Hunting and catching game | M | |
| Preparing the food | M[4] | W |
| Cultivation of food plants | M | W |
| Wool and cotton spinning | | W |
| Sewing | M[3] | W[3] |
| Manufacture of feather ornaments | M | |
| » » articles of calabash | M | |
| » » pottery | | W |
| » » articles of leather | M | W[3] |
| » » fishing nets | M | |
| » » articles of wood | M | |
| » » weapons | M | |
| » » bags, knitted of caraguata yarn | | W |
| » » » » » woollen » | | W |
| Load carrying | | W |
| Hut-building | M | W |
| Weaving | | W[3] |
| Drawing and carrying water | | W |
| Beer brewing | M[5] | W[3] |

The heavier burden of work undoubtedly falls to the lot of the women. It is their business to gather edible fruits, to carry home fuel and water, to prepare the food, and, of course, also to tend the children. When the tribe is travelling, it is the women who carry the household furniture and

[1] Nordenskiöld (13), p. 81.
[2] Nordenskiöld (13), p. 83.
[3] According to Nordenskiöld (13), p. 87.
[4] Roasting the food. According to Nordenskiöld (13), p. 87.
[5] Beer fermenting, only. According to Nordenskiöld (13), p. 87.

[Text continues on p.163]

1: Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6



equipment in large carrying-nets and bags; at such times the men march along unburdened, carrying in their hands only bow and arrows. This is, however, easily accounted for, as on the trek the men have always to be prepared to kill game for procuring food. If they, like the women, were hampered by heavy loads, they would practically have no chance at all of taking a ready arrow shot at game encountered on the march.

I never once saw grown women amusing themselves with any games or sports, whereas this is frequently the case with the men. The chief occupations of the latter consist of hunting, fishing, the gathering of wild honey and the manufacturing of various weapons and implements (see the above table of division of labour as between the sexes). The men give considerably less time to actual labour than the women, and to me it seemed as if the life of Choroti wives was hard and laborious, whilst that of the men, as a rule, was pretty light and easy-going.

Nevertheless, the men are by no means hard or cruel to their wives, and it appeared to me as if the women took it as a matter of course that they had to work for their husbands and children in the way they did, and, generally speaking, they seemed quite content with their lot in life. Indeed, I noticed many instances of real domestic happiness.

Parents bear great love to their children. These, when quite small, are carried by their mothers in a broad strip, or piece, of cloth in the way fig. 180 shows. The Choroti do not have many children; it is only seldom that the number of children exceeds four. According to Nordenskiöld, they are given names only when old enough to answer to them. The same author has noted down the following Choroti names, of which the first three are men's names, and the remainder women's names: Yóseliamíe (the killer of foxes), Hotenic (Mataco), Éstiáhua (a gallinaceous bird), Hayku (not sweet), Kósoki (suffering from skin eruptions), Asóshnialo (women in plenty).[1]

Parental authority does not amount to much, and actual bringing up and discipline is entirely out of the question. In cases where parents attain so great an age that they become irksome to their children, it is not unknown for the latter to kill them. Nordenskiöld's interpreter, Flores, once witnessed a Choroti man burning an old and decrepit woman alive. Old men and women, who are suspected of working evil by witchcraft, are sometimes burned alive, and therefore it is possible that belief in the

[1] Nordenskiöld (13), p. 85.

2: Nordenskiöld E-5 (1908-1909) 1919
SK6 Choroti SK6
Ashluslay SK5



## XXI.

## Carrying-utensils.

In the Chaco all heavy loads are carried by women. Like all South American Indians they carry heavy weights on the back and never on the head. The load is fastened by means of a band around the forehead. (Fig. 45)[1]. This is the one method of carrying known in S. America. The other is to fasten the load across the shoulders and round the chest. (Figs. 43 and 44). The pressure on the chest is generally equalized by holding with one hand the rope tied across the chest.

The Chaco tribes with whom we are here concerned bear their burdens in nets, never making use of baskets. In the accompanying table is indicated, by way of comparison, how the different tribes whom I got to know on my journeys bear their burdens.

On an examination of the literature dealing with the bearing of heavy loads by various Indian tribes we find that, in the greater part of S. America, the method is for the burden to rest upon the back, and to be fastened around the forehead. Only in the western and southernmost parts of S. America do the Indians carry heavy burdens in such wise that the burden rests on the back and is then fastened around the shoulders and chest, as e. g. among the

[1] Sometimes the bearer, in addition to the brow bands, has also bands across the shoulders. I have never seen these, however, in the Chaco, and elsewhere only among Indians serving white men as bearers.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6



C 562 C [162] C [847] C 562 462 591 583 M 562 584

are due — at least in part — to geographical causes. As to the Choroti, it is to be noticed that among them the women in general have great social importance, to such an extent in fact, that we may speak of a real gynaecocracy. This is in the first place due to the numerical disproportion between the sexes which, at least at present, exists in this tribe. The causes of this phenomenon are difficult to assign; there is for instance, no general custom of killing new-born female children which would account for it. Infanticide is indeed practised in the case of monstrous children and twins, but it has reference to male children as well as to female. Female children are appreciated perhaps more than male children, for the very reason that women are so few in the Choroti society. Whatever the real cause of the numerical paucity of the women, it is this fact which explains their social influence. Besides this, we have to take into consideration the strict division of labour between the sexes existing among the Indians. For instance, sowing and planting, the carrying of fuel, the gathering of wild fruits, the brewing of intoxicating drinks, and a good deal of other home industries are wholly or chiefly incumbent on the women. This to the Indians means that no man *can* successfully do work which custom prescribes shall be done by a woman. A consequence of this is that particular importance is ascribed to female work as such and that women in general are held in great esteem. From this point of view we must also explain the custom that a man who marries must go and live with his wife's family. It is mainly due to the reluctance of her parents to separate from her on account of the work she performs. Among the Choroti no compensation is given for a bride, because no bargaining of any kind whatever takes place between the members of the tribes. Instead of that, custom prescribes that the young husband shall render services to her parents, which is only possible if he stays with the family of his spouse for a longer or shorter time. In this way matrilocal marriage in the Choroti and other Chaco tribes seems to me to have originated, although the Choroti at any rate are not now aware of these services being really obligatory and a form of compensation for the wife. Marriage among them appears now as a wholly private affair based upon the voluntary agreement of both parties. But where a matrilocal marriage has developed, the children are naturally looked upon as belonging in the first place to the mother and to her tribe or clan, whereas the husband's importance as a family father is only secondary.

The same kind of »mother-right» and gynaecocracy also prevails, or prevailed formerly, among the *Mataco* Indians who, for instance, allow

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba 5/12
Choroti SK 6



M T C 273 462 415

We have already seen that the most appreciated of these drinks is algaroba beer, which by the Mataco and the Choroti is called *atäs*, by the Tobas again *maplyi*. The tree itself and its fruit is called *oáh* in the Mataco and the Choroti language, in the Toba language *map*. The sacred beer is prepared with the utmost care and with certain religious or magical ceremonies. At this preparation there appears a strict division of labour between men and women. Although the women are not allowed to drink of the beer, they seemingly perform the larger part of the work. They collect the fruit in the forest, carrying it home in their large caraguatá bags, and afterwards mash it in mortars. Some old women start to chew the fruit, mixing it well with saliva, whereupon they spit it out into a goat's hide, fixed in the ground by means of sticks in such a way that it forms a sort of vessel. The goat's hide is used by the Choroti and by the Argentine Mataco, whereas the Tobas and the Bolivian Mataco use a wooden trough for the purpose. Lastly, hot water is poured over the mashed fruit.

M T C 273 [462]

These preparations require nearly a whole day. The most essential thing still remains, namely the fermentation, and to effect this is a duty solely incumbent on the men, since women as a rule do not take part in conjurations. The fermentation is sacred, because it means the birth of the good spirit. Now this happens in the night, but night is the time when evil spirits move about. According to the belief of the Indians, the invisible persecutors appear in great numbers in order to prevent the birth of the good spirit and interfere with the drink so that it cannot ferment and is entirely spoiled. Therefore special precautions must be taken for the critical time. The brewing of the algaroba beer for the great festivals during the algaroba season is — especially among the primitive Choroti — a matter that concerns the whole community. Hence, at the approach of night, the men arrive from all houses with their rattle gourds, sit round the hide or trough, and begin to chant a noisy, monotonous song without words, shaking the rattles in the rhythm of their chant. This ceremony is called by the Choroti *nissammaha oáh*, by the Tobas *niapilák map*, and its most conspicuous object is to prevent the spirits from spoiling the beer. Since the new moon is believed to promote fermentation, a moonlight night is preferably chosen for the ceremony. The chant is typical of the Indian conjurations in the Chaco. It is always begun in a loud voice; then the voice gradually dies down, so that the last tones are only heard as a low and distant muttering. Thereupon they start again from the beginning, and so forth. In addi-

M T C [821]